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cism are vitally essential to this cause. Other professions are making more progress in organization and legislation than nursing. Is your profession of so little importance to you that you can neglect its mental, social and professional standing? Think it over.

## THE FLY AS A CAUSE OF DISEASE, FROM A NURSE'S STANDPOINT<sup>1</sup>

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Many articles have been written on the fly from various standpoints but never have I read one from a nurse's standpoint.

Just because the fly was sent upon the earth as a punishment (if it were), for the purposes of annoying our ancestors, there is no reason why we should let him treat us likewise. We are well aware that the fly carries disease germs, so every precaution should be used to prevent it from multiplying. When a nurse is called on a case, especially one that is infectious or contagious, extreme care should be taken to keep out the fly, not only for the benefit of the patient, but for the family, the nurse and the surrounding neighborhood. A screen should be placed on the patient's door, if possible, if not, on the dining-room door. It seems almost impossible to keep flies away when they are so numerous, and especially in rural homes, where there are so many cattle, and the cows are brought near the house at milking time and the horses at feeding time. A fly may settle on a patient, then hie away to the dining-room or kitchen or, perhaps, out to the road where the children are playing on their way home from school, eating a belated luncheon.

Children, and adults for that matter, will pick up an apple in the orchard, that has a decayed spot on it, eating it in preference to others because it is mellow, not thinking that many flies, possibly with the germs of some deadly disease upon them, have eaten from the same apple. I have seen a baby nursing from a bottle with flies swarming about the neck of the bottle. After the baby had grown tired of nursing and let the nipple fall from its mouth, the flies would swarm upon it. The mother was there, to be sure, but she was looking the other way, talking with a neighbor.

The way flies annoy helpless little babies who cannot do a thing in defense, is terrible. I think that every bottle-fed infant should be

<sup>1</sup> Read at a meeting of the Des Moines Registered Nurses' Association, Des Moines, Iowa, October, 1913.

placed in a screened inclosure at feeding time. I think, too, that railway companies should have at their depots a screened lunch-room for the free use of the traveling public. The poorer classes of people cannot afford to pay the present-day price of food at railway lunch-counters, and so carry their lunch with them. No doubt many of us have been in a waiting-room near such a family and have busily brushed away flies with both hands.

To quote from an address of Dr. Woods Hutchinson on, "Why is a Fly?"

We must not blame God for the fly, for man made him. He is the resurrection, the reincarnation of our own dirt and carelessness. He is merely one of our unsanitary curses coming home to roost. He is a domestic animal just as much as a dog, cow or sheep, and he cannot live outside of the special peculiar surroundings which we and our dirtiness and the dirtiness of our barnyards and domestic animals provide for him. The fly is absolutely unknown in the uninhabited forest. . . . If we would clean up and keep clean, there would be no necessity of preaching any gospel or conducting any campaign against the fly. We provide for him, we feed him on the same things that we eat. He goes about ubiquitously.

I should like to call your attention to an interesting report from New Orleans:

If we drain our surroundings, we will get rid of the mosquito; if we clean up our surroundings we will get rid absolutely of the typhoid fly, and all the diseases which he carries, such as typhoid, tuberculosis, the summer diseases of childhood, a certain amount of smallpox and trachoma.

In the Spanish-American war we lost four men from disease to one from bullets. In the Russo-Japanese war the Japanese lost one man from disease to fourteen from bullets. Should we let foreign countries excel us in sanitation? Soldiers are needed at all times, but they cannot fight when their physical condition is weakened by disease, and as long as we have the fly we shall have disease.

God helps those who help themselves, and while there are many physicians in the world, they cannot do all there is to be done.

The public health appropriation of the state of Iowa ranks the lowest of the states whose appropriations I have read. Doctors, nurses, Boy-Scouts, Campfire-Girls, with the laity, should work together for the betterment of these conditions.